

I voted Yes on H.R. 6684, the Spending Reduction Act of 2012.

As Congress continues to work towards a balanced solution to address the "fiscal cliff," I remain hopeful that leaders on both sides of the aisle will come together to reach an agreement before the end of the year.

However, should a deal fail to be reached, this legislation provides a path to protect our national security, Armed Forces, and veterans by replacing almost \$100 billion in across the board "sequestration" cuts to defense and domestic spending scheduled to take effect next year with targeted, common-sense savings from federal programs desperately needing reform.

There is bipartisan agreement that sequestration would undercut key responsibilities of the federal government and damage our Armed Forces and national defense. Unless prevented, sequestration consequences would include 200,000 soldiers and Marines being separated from service, two base closure (BRAC) rounds, and a 20 percent defense civilian personnel cut. The local effects would be felt immediately and negatively at Rome Lab, DFAS, and EADS — which would hamstring the Upstate economy.

Not only defense spending would be impacted by sequestration – it would also apply across-the-board cuts to a wide range of civilian domestic programs. It would mean cutting Head Start, resulting in 75,000 fewer slots for children in the program, slashing the National Institutes of Health by \$2.4 billion, and scaling back our border security with almost 2,000 fewer Border Patrol agents on the job.

We can find smarter ways to save money and reduce our deficit than across-the-board cuts—and we can even save more money while doing so. That's why this bill saves a net total of \$218 billion over ten years by reforming programs that have been subject to waste, fraud and abuse. For example, the bill closes a tax loophole that allows individuals to claim refundable tax checks from the government without providing a Social Security number. The IRS Inspector General found that non-US citizens are receiving \$4 billion annually through this loophole. The bill takes other commonsense steps like reforming the medical liability system, eliminating the government's "too big to fail" bank bailout fund, and winding down the failed Home Affordable Mortgage Program which has been underused and ineffective.

This bill would keep our government functioning next year at a responsible level that upholds our national defense, while also addressing our debt to lift the burden that has been placed on Upstate families and businesses.

I remain committed to supporting this and other solutions that would resolve the threat posed by sequestration so it does not devastate our Armed Forces and important priorities here at home.

The bill was approved by a vote of 215 – 209 – 1.